

WASHBURN COUNTY FOREST

ANNUAL WORK PLAN 2013

TO: THE HONORABLE WASHBURN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Following is the proposed Washburn County Forest work plan for the year 2013. The plan gives direction and meaning to the proposed County Forest budget. The plan further defines and supplements the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan and emphasizes the current needs of the County Forest and Recreational System.

I. TIMBER HARVEST

Timber harvests are not only important for the economic well being of Washburn County, but also for the health and vigor of the forest. This includes all aspects of the forest including wildlife, watershed protection, air quality, recreation, and many other noncommercial values. Professional implementation of proper forest management and harvest techniques is essential. The timber management goal is to produce sustained yields of forest products by scheduling timber sales as close as possible to achieve the average annual allowable cut. Compartment reconnaissance information from the Wisconsin Forest Reconnaissance System (WisFIRS) will be used to determine stands where timber cutting is needed. Washburn County Forest plans to offer for sale approximately 2,676* acres of new timber sales (excluding salvage operations due to unknown occurrences and re-advertising of defaulted timber sale contracts) in the following timber types in 2013:**

Aspen	<u>546</u> acres
Jack Pine	<u>50</u> acres
Red Pine	<u>600</u> acres
Northern Hardwoods	<u>600</u> acres
Red Oak	<u>600</u> acres
Red Oak – Regeneration	<u>50</u> acres
White Spruce & Balsam Fir	<u>80</u> acres
Swamp Hardwood	<u>50</u> acres
White Birch	<u>50</u> acres
Other	<u>50</u> acres

* The wind damage acreage that was salvaged in 2011 exceeded allowable harvest goals for the year. The additional acres harvested reduced the total acres available for 2012 and 2013.

** Timber sale establishment will exceed these acreages in order to build a timber sale “bank”

Information about what timber sale establishment activities are occurring at a specific time may be obtained by

contacting the Washburn County Forestry Office, 850 W Beaver Brook Ave, Spooner, WI. 54801; phone (715) 635-4490.

II. REFORESTATION

- A. Scarification of Soil (preparation of seed bed for natural regeneration):
 - 1. Pre-harvest 150 acres (jack pine, birch, balsam, oak)
 - 2. Post-harvest 0 acres
- B. Site preparation (site preparation for planting):
 - 1. Mechanical (Bracke) 0 acres
 - 2. Mechanical (disk trench) 340 acres
 - 3. Chemical 340 acres
- C. Direct Seeding 20 acres
- D. Plantings 0 acres
- E. Replanting 64 acres
- F. Prescribed burning 50 acres

III. TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT

- A. Release (removal of competition around young plantations):
 - 1. Hand 50 acres
 - 2. Chemical 177 acres
- B. Pre-Commercial Thinning 0 acres
- C. Ironwood Control (mowing) 100 acres

IV. COUNTY FOREST ROADS

- A. Grade all of the 94 miles entered into funded system.
- B. Gravel portions of gas tax roads as needed.
- C. Grade and gravel other fire lanes and roads not entered into the County Forest Road system.
- D. Mow 20 miles of County Forest Roads.

V. TIMBER ACCESS TRAILS

- A. Continue to implement the Road and Access Plan.
- B. Continue to plan all roads and access to keep them to a minimum.
- C. Continue road inventory project using GPS and collect information regarding use, work needs, and future use needs.
- D. Continue program to upgrade roads open to motor vehicles in order to reduce erosion and rutting.

VI. LAND ACQUISITION

- A. Follow direction of County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan and as approved by Forestry Committee.
 - 1. Evaluate land trades as presented to Forestry Committee for possible County Board approval.
 - 2. Evaluate land purchases as presented to Forestry Committee for possible County Board approval.
 - 3. Pursue grant funding sources for any approved acquisition project.
 - 4. Consider withdrawal of other lands to balance any proposed new acquisitions

VII. SURVEYING

- A. Present to committee problem areas for certified survey or remonumentation efforts. Surveys generally needed to prevent trespass or to clarify boundaries in order to continue management.
- B. Utilize Trimble GPS unit to locate interior property corners where section corners are available.

VIII. FOREST PROTECTION

- A. Continue cooperation with Wi. Dept. of Natural Resources by:
 - 1. Improving and maintaining fire lanes.
 - 2. Continue annual meeting to evaluate Forest operations facilitated by D.N.R. Liaison.
 - 3. Support fire suppression efforts when needed, however new strategies for assistance have been adopted. Given the issues with workload and available labor with the Forestry Department, along with cuts made by the Division of Forestry to the County Forest Program, a concerted effort will be made to scale back the assistance given to DNR on fires not within Washburn County or those not likely to impact the County Forest.

IX. MULTIPLE USE AND ECOSYSTEM-BASED PROJECTS

- A. Continue efforts to regenerate jack pine, white birch, balsam, red oak, and other intolerant timber types, through planting, scarification, prescribed burning, and other silvicultural harvest methods.
- B. Continue to maintain road and access plan
- C. Other projects allowed by the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan list for Wildlife Habitat Grants.
- D. Continue to request a cooperative management plan with DNR Wildlife and Natural Areas programs to manage for oak savannah habitats on selected sites in Chicog Township. Pursue management techniques to enhance savannah characters with the intent of the WDNR Wildlife and Natural Areas programs providing funding and manpower.

X. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) / COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

- A. Continue to operate and maintain currency of GIS system.
- B. Utilize the web based GIS / forest reconnaissance WisFIRS system (web based GIS editing system)
- C. Continue GPS logging trail inventory (complete at least 4 additional IRM unit)

XI. INTRODUCTION OF PRESCRIBED/CONTROLLED BURNING

- A. Continue to conduct prescribed burns as fire weather allows.
- B. Concentrate prescribed burning efforts in conjunction with shelterwood harvest in red oak and on maintenance of native pine stands.
- C. Evaluate effectiveness of prescribed burning for regenerating red oak, native pine, and for controlling competing vegetation.
- D. Cooperate with D.N.R. forestry and fire control to conduct burns in a safe and effective manner.

XII. RECREATION AREAS

- A. Snowmobile trails
 - 1. Complete any unfinished work needs on the Harmon Lake Mandatory Trail Relocation. This project relocates 6 miles of road route onto 10 miles of trail. Project initiated in 2012.
 - 2. Complete Whalen Creek Trail Bridge project. This project changes the current bridge location to a better area, alleviating a long stretch of wetland that is difficult to freeze. New trail area was constructed in 2012 and a bridge construction contract is expected to be executed in late 2012.
 - 3. Maintain 251 miles of state funded snowmobile trails (includes 10 miles of new trail funding for Harmon Lake Connection and 1 miles for Whalen Creek Bridge.
 - 4. Apply for annual maintenance grant funding for un-funded trail segments
 - 5. Apply for grant funding for any necessary bridge repairs or replacements, and other trail improvements.
 - 6. Install 911 marker signs. – Carry over from 2012
- B. Ski Trails

1. Continue to groom Nordic and Totogatic ski trails
2. Continue to try to recruit club labor to assist with trail maintenance using labor and equipment reimbursement with ATC annual impact funds.
3. Establish aspen timber sale along Nordic Woods Trail while accommodating shade and aesthetic needs. Widen outer trail loops as part of timber sale to accommodate grooming for free-style (skate) skiing.

C. ATV trails

1. Continue to operate and maintain the Wild River, Beaverbrook, Stony Brook, Spider Lake, Trail 39, and Harmon Lake trails using County and ATV club labor.
2. Continue to maintain bathroom and parking facilities in Trego and Sarona.
3. Complete any unfinished work needs for the Canadian National Recreation Trail Bridge at Highway 77, east of Minong. A majority of this project will be completed by the end of 2012.
4. Assist Village of Minong and City of Shell Lake with ATV campground project.
5. Complete the Stony Brook ATV trail rehabilitation project using awarded grant funds.
6. Maintenance funding was increased from \$450 to \$600 per mile. Retain the additional \$150 per mile to help fund maintenance work done with County equipment and labor. Allocate any remaining funds to repair problem trail areas.
7. Investigate feasibility of acquiring rights to develop Shell Lake to Barronett rail grade. Work to connect portions of the grade along, with road routes, to Barron County if a trail is developed from Cumberland north.
8. Work to acquire an easement from Plum Creek Timberland to upgrade the snowmobile trail from the Wild River Trail to North Road into a dual use trail.
9. Evaluate ATV trail 25 for rehabilitation and other trails for work needs and consider applying for trail rehabilitation grants from ATV funds where necessary.
10. Investigate trail connections, working with local ATV clubs, on public and private lands in the following areas:
 - Minong west to Burnett Co., minimizing County Highway ROW or town road routes.
 - Wild River Trail from either Spooner or Trego to connect with Casey Township.
11. Continue to participate in the new permanent UTV program established in 2012.

D. Other recreation trails:

1. Assist with maintenance on the Wildcat Mountain Bike Trail in Beaverbrook Township.
2. Attempt to develop a club, or “friends of” group to assist with maintenance of the Dugan Run Horse Trail.
3. Replace hand pump at Dugan Run, either with a new hand pump, solar operated or other type of system.
4. Utilize annual impact fees from powerline funds to reimburse local clubs for labor, materials and equipment on non-motorized trails

E. Parks & Campgrounds:

1. Totogatic Park (75 units).
 - a. Restore storage building.
 - b. Rehabilitate access points, erosion control structures along shoreline, and boat landing during the proposed draw down of Minong Flowage. Grant funds from the County Conservation Aids program were awarded for this project.
 - c. Construct a new wood pen, if not completed in 2012.
 - d. Install new playground equipment purchased in 2012.
 - e. Continue gravelling, leveling, and placing railroad tie borders on entrances to sites.

- f. Re-shingle shower house.
- g. Construct registration booth.
- h. Continue the tree planting program. Consider renting a tree spade attachment for the Posi-track to move trees from the nursery area.
- i. Continue the online reservation system.
- j. Designate remote campsites and implement camping policy on old cabin permit sites as approved by the Committee
- k. Maintain and operate facilities.
- 2. Leisure Lake Youth Camp:
 - a. Continue to operate and maintain facilities.
 - b. Replace deteriorating roof on the main lodge.
- 3. Sawmill Lake Campground – continue to operate and maintain facilities.
- 4. Dugan and Harmon Equestrian Campsites
 - a. Continue to operate facilities
 - b. Replace hand pump and Dugan Run
 - c. Evaluate Harmon Lake for addition of sanitary dump station, which will also serve for Sawmill Park.

F. Other:

- 1. Increase maintenance levels of County Forest boat landings.
- 2. Implement recreation recommendations as per the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

G. Hallstrom Woods

- 1. Continue to maintain facility and mow trails
- 2. Suspend aerator system operations on the lake due to excessive electrical costs.
- 3. Evaluate trail system for ski trail grooming opportunities

H. Rifle Range

Continue to operate and maintain facility.

XIII. BUILDINGS, EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES:

A. Forestry Department facilities

- 1. Forestry Shop – continue to operate and maintain facility.
- 2. Totogatic Park Ranger Residence - continue to operate and maintain facility.

B. Equipment

- 1. Purchase replacement 5th wheel trailer.
- 2. Purchase a smaller, used ATV to replace an older, non-operating machine.
- 3. Purchase additional mobile radio for Forest Administrator's vehicle.
- 4. Continue to operate and maintain existing Forestry equipment pool.

C. Wildlife Flowages

- 1. Remove Little Grassy Lake flowage control structure and restore the site using grant funds awarded from WDNR.
- 2. Complete work needs outlined in the Davis Flowage Dam Inspection Report.
- 3. Evaluate Black Brook Flowage Dam for removal if WDNR Wildlife does not complete the required inspection by the end of 2012. Also evaluate how to retain timber haul access if dike and structure are removed.
- 4. Taylor Lake Flowage was determined to be owned by WDNR Wildlife. Assist DNR, where feasible, with removal of this structure.
- 5. Evaluate the Conroy Dam for feasibility of retaining the flowage on County Forest.

XIV. SPECIAL PROJECTS, GRANTS AND FUNDING

A. Wildlife grant (\$.05 per acre grant for wildlife habitat)

1. Maintain intolerant timber types (scarification for jack pine, white birch, oak, and balsam; prescribed burning for red oak and pine).
2. Fund up to \$5000.00 from this account for Forestry Tech I position. A percentage of the job description includes work funded from this account.
3. Fund a partial payment of the mechanical site preparation projects that relate to jack pine regeneration.
4. Fund other projects as approved in the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

B. Sustainable Forestry Grant – The Forestry Department received a grant of \$50,000 to provide funding for site preparation for planting on storm damaged sites from the 2011 wind storm. Plans are also in place to apply for addition funds in 2013 to offset planting costs on storm salvage sites in 2014.

C. Other Labor – Utilize the Gordon prison crew where feasible, especially with Parks projects and conifer hand release.

XV. Staff / Personnel

- A.** Investigate opportunities to provide law enforcement for forestry, parks and trails after the 2011 decision by the Sheriff to pull the Park Ranger / Deputy Sheriff onto road duty.
- B.** Hire a summer intern position to assist with timber sale establishment.

XVI. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Time Standards

- A.** Coordinate with Washburn Team Leader and other Division of Forestry staff to consolidate as many time standards hours as possible into a minimum number of staff in order to create efficiencies within the allotted hours.
- B.** Focus time primarily on timber sale establishment. The Liaison Forester or County Forest Foresters will act as lead forester on these projects. DNR staff will work under the direction of these lead foresters while conducting marking duties.
- C.** Heavy equipment hours on scarification and other site prep duties will be conducted at the discretion of the County Forest Administrator.
- D.** Look for opportunities to develop longer range and better plans for the use of the time standard hours. In addition, Washburn County Forestry will be requesting detailed reports on which staff have allocated hours to the County and what work duties they performed.
- E.** Consider accepting hours only from local team members (Minong or Spooner), or at a minimum that any employees from outside the County are reporting at a local station at 8:00 a.m. and leaving at 4:30.

XVI. Forest Certification – Continue to participate in SFI and FSC forest certification programs. Monitor standards for compliance and take an active role in the developing any new measurements standards as necessary.